



Customer No. 26874
PATENT TRADEMARK OFFICE
Atty. Docket: END909-0511036

IN THE UNITED STATES PATENT & TRADEMARK OFFICE

Applicant: Shelton et al. : Paper No:
Serial No. 10/615,974 : Group Art Unit:
Filed: July 9, 2003 : Examiner:
For: SURGICAL STAPLING INSTRUMENT INCORPORATING A TAPERED FIRING
BAR FOR INCREASED FLEXIBILITY AROUND THE ARTICULATION JOINT

INFORMATION DISCLOSURE STATEMENT

Commissioner for Patents
P.O. Box 1450
Alexandria, VA 22313-1450

Dear Sir:

In accordance with 37 C.F.R. §§ 1.97 and 1.98, Applicants herewith submit certain patent references and other information, which the Patent & Trademark Office may wish to consider in examining the above-identified application. The references are provided below, and are also listed on the attached Form PTO-1449.

U.S. PATENTS	ISSUE/ PUBLICATION DATE	INVENTOR
5,031,814	07-16-191	Tompkins et al.
5,071,052	12-10-1991	Rodak et al.
5,137,198	08-11-1992	Nobis et al.
5,397,046	03-14-1995	Savage et al.
5,413,267	05-09-1995	Solyntjes et al.
5,413,268	05-09-1995	Green et al.
5,445,304	08-29-1995	Plyley et al.
5,484,095	01-16-1996	Green et al.
5,535,937	07-16-1996	Boiarski et al.
5,584,425	12-17-1996	Savage et al.
5,680,983	10-28-1997	Plyley et al.
5,709,334	01-20-1998	Sorrentino et al.
5,735,445	04-07-1998	Vidal et al.
5,918,791	07-06-1998	Sorrentino et al.
6,032,849	03-07-2000	Mastri et al.
6,079,606	06-27-2000	Milliman et al.
6,109,500	08-29-2000	Alli et al.
2001/0029384 A1	10-11-2001	Nicholas et al.

Serial No. 10/615,974

Pursuant to the waiver published in the Pre-OG Notice, dated July 11, 2003, no copies are provided herewith of U.S. patents cited. No representation is made or intended that a prior art search has been made or that no better art than the listed is available. It is respectfully requested that the information be considered by the Examiner and made of record in the present application.

CERTIFICATE OF MAILING	
I hereby certify that a copy of this correspondence is being deposited with the United States Postal Service as first class mail in an envelope addressed to Commissioner of Patents, P.O. Box 1450, Alexandria, VA 22313-1450 on	
<u>10-9</u>	<u>2003</u>
<u>Sarah Ohlweiler</u>	
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Respectfully submitted,

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Substitute for Form PTO 1449

**INFORMATION DISCLOSURE
STATEMENT BY APPLICANT***(use as many sheets as necessary)***Complete if Known**

Application No.	10/615,974
Filing Date	July 9, 2003
First Named Inventor	SHELTON, Frederick E. IV et al.
Art Unit	
Examiner Name	

Sheet	1	of	1	Attorney Docket No.	END909-0511036
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U.S. PATENT DOCUMENTS

Examiner initials	Cite No.	DOCUMENT NUMBER		Publication Date MM-DD-YYYY	Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Pages, Columns, Lines, Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear
		Number-Kind code ² (if known)				
		US-	5,031,814	07-16-191	Tompkins et al.	
		US-	5,071,052	12-10-1991	Rodak et al.	
		US-	5,137,198	08-11-1992	Nobis et al.	
		US-	5,397,046	03-14-1995	Savage et al.	
		US-	5,413,267	05-09-1995	Solyntjes et al.	
		US-	5,413,268	05-09-1995	Green et al.	
		US-	5,445,304	08-29-1995	Plyley et al.	
		US-	5,484,095	01-16-1996	Green et al.	
		US-	5,535,937	07-16-1996	Boiarski et al.	
		US-	5,584,425	12-17-1996	Savage et al.	
		US-	5,680,983	10-28-1997	Plyley et al.	
		US-	5,709,334	01-20-1998	Sorrentino et al.	
		US-	5,735,445	04-07-1998	Vidal et al.	
		US-	5,918,791	07-06-1998	Sorrentino et al.	
		US-	6,032,849	03-07-2000	Mastri et al.	
		US-	6,079,606	06-27-2000	Milliman et al.	
		US-	6,109,500	08-29-2000	Alli et al.	
		US-	2001/0029384 A1	10-11-2001	Nicholas et al.	

FOREIGN PATENT DOCUMENTS

Examiner initials	Cite No.	Foreign Patent Document	Publication Date MM-DD-YYYY	Name of Patentee or Applicant of Cited Document	Pages, Columns, Lines, Where Relevant Passages or Relevant Figures Appear	T ⁶
		Country Code ³ -Number ⁴ -Kind code ⁵ (if known)				

OTHER PRIOR ART – NON PATENT LITERATURE DOCUMENTS

Examiner initials	Cite No.	Include name of the author (in CAPITAL LETTERS), title of the article (when appropriate), title of the item (book, magazine, journal, serial, symposium, catalog, etc.), date, page(s), volume-issue number(s), publisher, city and/or country where published	T ⁶

EXAMINER SIGNATURE _____

DATE CONSIDERED _____

EXAMINER: Initial if reference considered, whether or not citation is in conformance with MPEP 609; Draw line through citation if not in conformance and not considered. Include copy of this form with next communication to applicant.

¹ Applicant's unique citation designation number (optional). ² See Kinds Codes of USPTO Patent Documents at www.uspto.gov or MPEP 901.04. ³ Enter office that issued the document, by the two-letter code (WIPO Standard ST. 3). ⁴ For Japanese patent documents, the indication of the year of the reign of the Emperor must precede the serial number of the patent document. ⁵ Kind of document by the appropriate symbols as indicated on the document under WIPO Standard ST. 16 if possible. ⁶ Applicant is to place a check mark here if English language Translation is attached.